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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13
OMB-01 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 /071 W
----------050542Z 075036 /17
R 041125Z JAN 77
FM AMCONSUL LAHORE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1117
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMCONSUL KARACHI

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PK
SUBJECT: UDF TO PARTICIPATE IN GENERAL ELECTIONS

REF: LAHORE 1464

1. PROFESSOR GHAFOOR AHMAD, SECRETARY GENERAL OF UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT (UDF), DECLARED AT PRESS CONFERENCE IN KARACHI DECEMBER 29 THAT THE UDF HAS DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE IN UPCOMING GENERAL ELECTIONS. ACCORDING TO NAWA-I-WAQT'S LAHORE EDITION DECEMBER 30, AHMAD SAID ALL LEGAL REQUIRE" MENTS WOULD BE MET BY OPPOSITION DURING ELECTIONS AND GAVE ASSURANCES THAT OPPOSITION WOULD APPROACH POLLS WITH SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY.

2. AHMAD EXPRESSED HOPE THAT ALL OPPOSITION PARTIES WOULD AGREE ON PUTTING UP SINGLE (JOINT) CANDIDATES FROM EACH CONSTITUENCY. HE ANNOUNCED THAT CENTRAL PARLIAMENTARY BOARD OF UDF WILL MEET SOMETIME IN JANUARY TO SELECT ITS CANDIDATES. HE SAID EFFORTS WERE BEING MADE TO BRING ABOUT WIDER OPPOSITION UNITY. IF THEY WERE SUCCESSFUL, UDF MAN- IFESTO WOULD BE REVISED TO ACCOMMODATE AS FAR AS POSSIBLE
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VIEWS OF TEHRIK-I-ISTIQLAL (TIP), JAMIAT-UL-ULAMA-E-PAKISTAN (JUP) AND NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (NDP). MANIFESTO WOULD THEN BE ANNOUNCED AFTER DATE FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS IS DECLARED.

3. FOLLOWING GHAFOOR'S ANNOUNCEMENT, JAMAAT-E-ISLAMI (JI) CENTRAL WORKING COMMITTEE RATIFIED UDF DECISION AT A MEETING IN ISLAMABAD SAME DAY. ACCORDING PRESS, JUI

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COMMITTEE PROPOSED THAT: (A) THREE NON-UDF PARTIES --
TIP, JUP AND NDP SHOULD BE INVITED TO JOIN UDF, OR (B)
UDF NHOULD BE DISSOLVED AND A NEW ORGANIZATION ESTABLISHED.
IN EITHER CASE, JOINT CANDIDATES SHOULD CONTEST FROM EACH
CONSTITUENCY. COMMITTEE REPORTEDLY SET UP CENTRAL,
PROVINCIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY BOARDS AND DIRECTED THEM TO
PREPARE LIST OF PARTY CANDIDATES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

4. JUP CENTRAL WORKING COMMITTEE AND CENTRAL PARLIAMENTARY
BOARD MET IN LAHORE DECEMBER 31 UNDER CHAIRMANSHIP OF PARTY
CHIEF SENATOR MAULANA SHAH AHMAD NOORANI. ACCORDING PRESS
REPORTS, JUP LEADERSHIP REITERATED EARLIER ANNOUNCEMENT
THAT IT WOULD JOINTLY PARTICIPATE IN ELECTIONS WITH TIP
AND HELD OUT HOPES FOR BROADER OPPOSITION UNITY. AS FAR
AS POSSIBLE, JOINT CANDIDATES WOULD CONTEST AGAINST PPP
NOMINEES. DIRECTIVES WERE REPORTEDLY SENT TO ALL PARTY
BRANCHES TO PREPARE LIST OF CANDIDATES.

5. PAKISTAN JAMHOORI PARTY (PJP) HELD SIMILAR MEETING
IN LAHORE JANUARY 2 AT WHICH PARTY CHIEF NAWAB NUSRULLAH
KHAN ORDERED PARTY TO BEGIN PREPARATIONS FOR ELECTIONS.
THE JI CENTRAL WORKING COMMITTEE WILL REPORTEDLY MEET IN
LAHORE JANUARY 5 TO ORGANIZE WORKERS. ONLY OPPOSITION
PARTY WHICH HAS NOT DECLARED ITS STANCE SO FAR IS NDP.

6. NAWA-I-WAQT JANUARY 4 REPORTED STATEMENT IN PESHAWAR
PREVIOUS DAY BY MAULANA MUFTI MAHMOOD, MNA (JUI) AND
ACTING LEADER OF OPPOSITION IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, THAT
A JOINT MEETING OF ALL OPPOSITION PARTIES WILL BE HELD
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IN LAHORE JANUARY 9 TO DISCUSS ELECTION STRATEGY. MUFTI
REPORTEDLY SAID THAT TICKETS WOULD NOT BE AWARDED ON A
PERCENTAGE BASIS, BUT RATHER WOULD BE GIVEN TO STRONGEST
CANDIDATE IN DISTRICT REGARDLESS OF PARTY AFFILIATION.

7. ADDRESSING PRESS CONFERENCE IN LAHORE JANUARY 3,
MIAN MAHMUD ALI KASURI, MNA (TIP) DECLARED IN FAVOR
OF OPPOSITION UNITY, BUT SAID TIP CANDIDATES SHOULD GET
MOST JOINT TICKETS BECAUSE IT WAS FIRST OPPOSITION PARTY
TO ANNOUNCE THAT IT WOULD CONTEST. HE DEMANDED CHANGES
IN ELECTION COMMISSION, CLAIMING GOVERNMENT WAS NOT SINCERE
ABOUT HOLDING FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS.

8. EMBASSY COMMENTS FOLLOW.
GAMON

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